

The Garden in August

Holiday Precautions

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As holidays are so general in August, perhaps the best advice that can be given to those about to leave gardens without anyone to look after them in their absence is to mow and trim the grass; remove flowers and buds about to open from plants, so that instead of wasting their energies in the meantime they will have all the more in reserve for one's return; and give all beds a thorough weeding, remembering that each weed prevented from making and scattering seed would otherwise be a potential distributor of scores of other causes of trouble.

For those not going away there will be plenty of other work to do. Roses, like many softer wooded shrubs, have suffered severely from wind and rain, and a lot of knife play will be necessary to bring the beds back to a normal appearance. Flowers which have "balled" by the gluing of the outer petals are never worth retaining and should be cut back at once to the nearest strong bud or new shoot and the cuttings burned. If left they become the prey of mildew and a source of infection to others. Stimulants may be continued until about the middle of the month, but should then be put aside, as they are likely to produce too much soft, sappy growth of no use to the tree. And as warm, damp weather is favourable to the spread of mildew, it would be a wise precaution to give all the trees a thorough spraying of liver of sulphur (sulphide of potassium), dissolved at the rate of one ounce to two gallons of water and three ounces of soft soap. The mixture should be made just before the application. If the sulphide be not handy, the simple Russian method of treatment may be substituted—spraying with a solution of bicarbonate of soda dissolved at the rate of a quarter of an ounce to two gallons of water. And as soon as possible after the flowers have faded the flowered shoots of all "rambler" roses—not the climbing hybrids now so numerous—should be cut back close to the stems from which they have sprung.

Dahlias are now making good progress

and all tall varieties should have the support of a stout central stake and of as many radiating bamboos as the strong outgrowths necessitate. It is the only safe way. Overcrowding should be prevented by systematic removal of the weaker side shoots. The soil should be kept moist in dry weather by generous watering; weak solutions of fertilisers may be applied once a week when the flowers are being freely produced; and the usual devices should be adopted for the trapping of earwigs and caterpillars which, with hordes of capsid bugs, are already at work.

Gladioli, too, should now be revealing their flowering stems, and as soon as these are sufficiently free from the broad leaves they should be supported

by canes as tall as the flowers are likely to reach. This is particularly necessary with the taller large-flowered varieties. Copious watering is desirable in their case also during dry weather, and the soil should be kept free from weeds and from caking after watering or prolonged rains.

A fortnightly application of soot water and another of sulphate of iron—about half an ounce to two gallons of water—are beneficial to early-flowering chrysanthemums, and most varieties which produce buds freely in groups of three give better blooms if the two smaller side buds of each group are pinched out while they are still small.

B. L.

F.E.A., Helsby.—August is the month for planting and replanting bulbs of the Madonna lily.

